

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RABAT 06203 01 OF 02 231322Z

47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PM-04 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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P 231210Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7270

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

COMNAVTRACOM KENITRA MOR PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

NAVCOMMSTA SIDI YAHIA MOR PRIORITY

USCINCEUR ECJ 4/7 PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 6203

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, MO

SUBJECT: U.S. NAVY PLANS FOR NAVTRACOM KENITRA AND NAVCOMSTA

REF: STATE 289782

1. CNO'S MOROCCO SURVEY TEAM HEADED BY CAPT. KIRK MILLER BRIEFED ME AND MY STAFF ON DECEMBER 19 CONCERNING U.S. NAVY PLANS FOR NAVAL TRAINING COMMAND AT KENITRA AND NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT SIDI YAHIA AND BOUKNADEL. TEAM SUBMITTING ITS REPORT TO COMNAVTELCOM IN WASHINGTON DECEMBER 22. GIST OF REPORT IS THAT NAVY WISHES TO TERMINATE ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT TO MOROCCAN FORCES AT KENITRA AT EARLIEST REASONABLE TIME, WITH TARGET DATE OF JANUARY 1, 1977 FOR DECOMMISSIONING OF NAVTRACOM AND OF JUNE 30, 1977 FOR TRANSFER OF RESIDUAL FACILITIES TO MOROCCO. MEANWHILE, NAVY WISHES TO RETAIN FACILITIES AT SIDI YAHIA AND BOUKNADEL UNTIL JUNE 30, 1979, WITH OPTION TO CONTINUE THEREAFTER ON YEAR-TO-YEAR BASIS. NAVY WOULD BEGIN PHASING OUT KENITRA WITH FIRST REDUCTIONS OF MOROCCAN PERSONNEL IN MAY 1976. (COPY OF REPORT BEING POUCHED TO NEA/AFN).

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PAGE 02 RABAT 06203 01 OF 02 231322Z

2. SURVEY TEAM'S REPORT STRIKES US AS BEING A WELL-

DRAFTED, WORKMANLIKE PRODUCT, REPRESENTING AN ESSENTIAL INPUT INTO ANY OVERALL USG NEGOTIATING POSITION IN PREPARATION FOR BROACHING THIS ISSUE WITH KING HASSAN AND HIS GOVERNMENT. INASMUCH AS SURVEY TEAM'S MANDATE WAS LIMITED TO PUTTING TOGETHER A TECHNICAL STUDY FROM PERSPECTIVE OF NAVAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS NEEDS, A NUMBER OF BROADER POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE NOT ADDRESSED BY THE TEAM. WE WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO FLAG THESE MATTERS FOR APPROPRIATE POLICY LEVELS IN DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE.

3. IN OUR ASSESSMENT, THESE BROADER CONSIDERATIONS FALL INTO TWO CATEGORIES: (A) QUESTION OF CHOOSING MOST SUITABLE TIMING FOR RAISING NAVY DESIRES WITH GOM, AND (B) THE PROS AND CONS OF OPENING UP OUR UNWRITTEN, RENT-FREE AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO TO A REVISION WHICH COULD COST USG MORE MONEY AND RENDER USG MORE VULNERABLE TO MOROCCAN PRESSURES FOR POLITICAL AND MILITARY SUPPORT.

4. TIMING: THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS LEADING US TO QUESTION WHETHER THE PRESENT MOMENT IS THE PROPER ONE TO RAISE WITH GOM THE QUESTION OF PHASING OUT KENITRA. (A) ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, IT REMAINS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO AVOID ACTIONS THAT COULD BE MISINTERPRETED AS A DIMINUTION OF US INTEREST IN MOROCCO. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY INDICATED, DEVELOPMENT OF OUR MILITARY SALES PROGRAM TO FAR HAS NOW REACHED POINT WHERE IT CAN HELP OFFSET ANY SUCH MISPERCEPTION. TEMPORARILY COUNTERBALANCING THIS FACTOR, HOWEVER, IS THE CURRENTLY VERY HIGH LEVEL OF TENSION BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA (WHICH FRANKLY WE HAD BEEN HOPING, AS OF A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED BY THIS TIME). AS LONG AS THREAT OF OUTRIGHT WARFARE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA CONTINUES TO PREOCCUPY BOTH NATIONS, WE SHOULD BE WARY OF TAKING ANY ACTION WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED EITHER HERE, OR IN ALGIERS AND MOSCOW, AS STEP TOWARD REDUCTION OF US INTEREST IN MOROCCO. WE WOULD JUDGE THIS FACTOR TO BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT AT PRESENT MOMENT, SINCE POSSIBILITY SUCH MISINTERPRETATION WOULD APPEAR ENHANCED BY CURRENT SITUATION IN ANGOLA. (B) A RELATED CONSIDERATION

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PAGE 03 RABAT 06203 01 OF 02 231322Z

IS THAT IN TIME OF EXTREME NATIONAL DANGER, MOROCCANS MORE LIKELY THAN EVER TO EXPLOIT USG INITIATIVE ON KENITRA TO DEMAND TANGIBLE POLITICAL AND PERHAPS MILITARY SUPPORT FROM US VIS-A-VIS ALGERIA AS PRICE FOR AGREEING TO CONTINUATION OF STATUS QUO AT SIDI YAHIA (SEE BELOW).

5. THE FOREGOING POLITICAL CONCERNS, IN OUR OPINION, WILL PROBABLY SOON DIMINISH. WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO

BELIEVE THAT ALGERIA AND MOROCCO CAN SUSTAIN PRESENT HIGH LEVEL OF TENSION OVER SAHARA FOR MORE THAN A MATTER OF SEVERAL MORE MONTHS AT THE MOST, AND HOPE THAT GOA WILL SOON DECIDE TO CUT ITS LOSSES AND SIMMER DOWN. ON THE OTHER HAND, ALGERIAN-SUPPORTED GUERRILLA WARFARE IN THE SAHARA COULD CONTINUE FOR A FAIRLY EXTENDED PERIOD, WITH TENSIONS BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO REMAINING FAIRLY HIGH, ALTHOUGH HOPEFULLY SOMEWHAT LESS SO THAN AT PRESENT.

6. QUESTION OF GENERAL FEASIBILITY: A LONGER-TERM, MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE IS WHETHER ADVANTAGES OUTWEIGH DISADVANTAGES AT ALL, IN OUR SEEKING TO REVISE OUR UNWRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO ON NAVAL FACILITIES AS LONG AS USN WISHES RETAIN SOME OF THEM. AS WASHINGTON IS AWARE, IT IS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD BY GOM THAT WHILE USG PAYS NO EXPLICIT "RENT" FOR SIDI YAHIA AND BOUKNADEL, COMPENSATION OF SORTS DOES EXIST IN FORM OF THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE THE MOROCCAN MILITARY THROUGH OUR PRESENCE AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES AT KENITRA. THE NAVY'S DESIRE TO CUT EXPENSES BY ELIMINATING FACILITIES BENEFITING GOM WHILE RETAINING THOSE DIRECTLY SUPPORTING OUR NEEDS THEREFORE COULD WELL, IN OUR VIEW, OPEN A PANDORA'S BOX. WE HAVE, FOREXAMPLE, NOTED WITH INTEREST FOLLOWING PASSAGE FROM EVANS AND NOVAK ARTICLE ON US-TURKISH RELATIONS AS REPRINTED IN DEC. 15 PARIS HERALD TRIB: "NATO COMMITS THE US TO COME TO THE DEFENSE OF TURKEY IN CASE OF COMMUNIST ATTACK. SPAIN, WITH NO SUCH COMMITMENT FROM WASHINGTON, HAS EVERY RIGHT TO CHARGE MONEY FOR US BASES." MOROCCANS READ US PRESS TOO, AND NO DOUBT WILL BE INTRIGUED BY THIS STATEMENT, HOWEVER UNOFFICIAL, THAT US BASES QUALIFY HOST COUNTRY FOR EITHER FINANCIAL RENT OR A DEFENSE COMMITMENT.

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PAGE 04 RABAT 06203 01 OF 02 231322Z

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PAGE 01 RABAT 06203 02 OF 02 231510Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PM-04 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7271

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

COMNAVTRACOM KENITRA MOR PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

NAVCOMSTA SIDI YAHIA MOR PRIORITY

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 6203

7. IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING, FOR EXAMPLE, IF MOROCCANS IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS ENDED UP ASKING A RENT FOR SIDI YAHIA/BOUKNADEL HIGHER THAN THE \$6 OR \$7 MILLION PER YEAR WHICH NAVY BELIEVES CAN BE SAVED BY CLOSING KENITRA. MOROCCO'S ESTIMATED BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT OF \$170 MILLION FOR THIS YEAR AND \$70 MILLION FOR NEXT COULD BE AN ELEMENT IN MOROCCAN THINKING. WE ALSO ENVISAGE POSSIBILITY THAT USG MAY, DURING ANY PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS TO RETAIN SIDI YAHIA AND BOUKNADEL, FIND ITSELF EXPOSED TO PRESSING REQUESTS FOR ACCELERATED AND AUGMENTED MILITARY DELIVERIES, PLUS PERHAPS OTHER INDICATIONS OF US POLITICAL SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY IF TENSIONS WITH ALGERIA PERSIST. A RELATED FACTOR WHICH WASHINGTON CAN BEST JUDGE IS THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOROCCO MIGHT ENTAIL CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT.

8. WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE TO US NAVY OF ACHIEVING ECONOMIES NOT ONLY IN FUNDS BUT ALSO IN PERSONNEL POSITIONS. WE WOULD THINK IT PRUDENT, HOWEVER, TO GIVE FURTHER THOUGHT TO QUESTION OF WHETHER A LESS DRAMATIC BUT STILL EFFECTIVE US APPROACH CAN BE FOUND WHICH WILL IN EFFECT LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE. IN OUR DECEMBER 19 SESSION WITH THE NAVY SURVEY TEAM, FOR EXAMPLE, WE
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PAGE 02 RABAT 06203 02 OF 02 231510Z

INQUIRED ABOUT FEASIBILITY OF REDUCING OR ELIMINATING ACTIVITIES AT KENITRA WHICH INVOLVE ONLY US NAVY WHILE MAINTAINING THOSE OPERATIONS WHICH CONSTITUTE COMPENSATION TO THE MOROCCANS FOR CONTINUED USE OF SIDI YAHIA AND BOUKNADEL. SURVEY TEAM ESTIMATED THAT ONLY A 10-15 PCT SAVING COULD BE REALIZED IN SUCH A MANNER. WE NEVERTHELESS SUSPECT THAT A TRULY DRACONIAN REDUCTION OF UNESSENTIAL US PRESENCE AT KENITRA, INCLUDING ELIMINATION OF SHOPPING FACILITIES, TURNING OVER OF ALL SECURITY

FUNCTIONS TO MOROCCAN FORCES, SHIFT OF US HOUSING TO
OTHER AREAS, AND SIMILAR MEASURES COULD RESULT IN IMPRES-
SIVE ECONOMIES. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE CONCERNED
WASHINGTON AGENCIES EXPLORE THIS AVENUE FURTHER, BEARING
IN MIND THAT WE ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED IN
RETAINING THE FACILITIES WE NEED AT A REASONABLE MONETARY
AND POLITICAL COST BY ANTICIPATING MOROCCAN PERCEPTIONS
AND REQUIREMENTS FROM THE OUTSET.
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